

REMARKS

This reply is responsive to an Office Action mailed on October 5, 2001. Claims 1-10 were pending in the application and were rejected in the Office Action. By way of this reply, Applicant has amended claims 1, 4 and 6-8. Accordingly, claims 1-10 are submitted for consideration by the Examiner.

Drawings

The Examiner objects to the Figure 7 of the drawings as incorrectly illustrating the location of the locking lever on the seat support platform. Applicant fails to understand the objection. Figure 7 illustrates a top plan view of the platform with the locking lever 110 in a release position. Applicant believes Figure 7 correctly illustrates the location of the locking lever.

The Examiner further objects to the drawings as failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(p)(5) for failure to include reference signs 302a, 304a and 312. Applicant respectfully notes that Figure 11 includes reference sign 312 as referencing the cam lever. Applicant proposes to amend Figure 4 as shown in red on the sheet accompanying the attached Request for Approval of Drawing Changes, to correct the informalities.

Specification

The Examiner objects to the sentence on page 7, lines 13-14, incorporating by reference an issued U.S. patent. Incorporation by reference of a U.S. patent publication is appropriate for either essential material or nonessential subject matter pursuant to M.P.E.P. § 608.01(p). Therefore, this objection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner also objects to certain informalities in the specification. The Applicant has amended the specification, incorporating the Examiner's suggestions.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicant has amended claim 1 to correctly recite the "seat receiving structure". As to claim 10, Applicant respectfully notes that claim 10 depends from claim 9 and that claim

9 recites “a lever”. Thus, the limitation “said lever” in claim 10 does not lack antecedent basis.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 8-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,183,043 B1 to Nelson (hereinafter “Nelson”). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection submits that the claims, as amended, are patentable.

The disclosed embodiments of the present invention may be directed to a quick release/connection arrangement for a seat such as for a bicycle. One embodiment of the invention, as recited in amended claim 1, comprises “a lever-operated rotatable locking element” for selectively engaging elongate members of a seat frame, for example. Thus, the rotatable locking element may be rotated between “a first position wherein engagement between the rotatable locking element and the elongate members is absent” and “a second position wherein the elongate members are engaged by the rotatable locking element” Thus, the disclosed system provides a rotatable locking element for selectively rotating between a locking position and a release position.

In contrast, Nelson neither suggests nor teaches “a rotatable locking element.” Nelson discloses a clamping arrangement wherein a cam lever 328 is used to release or secure an elongated member of a seat between a first clamp part 336 and a second clamp part 337. See Nelson, col. 13, lines 18-35 and Fig. 12. The Office Action cites element 328 as being “a lever operated rotatable locking element.” However, element 328 is merely the actuating cam lever for actuating the locking system. Nelson neither teaches nor suggests a “lever-operated rotatable locking element” as claimed in amended claim 1. The only locking elements disclosed by Nelson are the first and second clamp parts 336, 337 and 361,362. These locking elements do not rotate. Rather, they slide along a shaft 324 to engage the seat members. Thus, Nelson does not anticipate independent claim 1.

Similarly, independent claim 8, as amended, recites “a lever-operated rotatable locking element ... selectively rotatable between a first position ... and a second position.” Thus, for the reasons discussed above with reference to claim 1, claim 8 is also not anticipated by Nelson.

Claims 1, 3 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,228,796 to Kao (hereinafter “Kao”). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection submits that the claims, as amended, are patentable.

Kao also neither suggests nor teaches “a rotatable locking element.” Kao discloses a clamping arrangement including a lever 12 and locknuts 4. The lever actuates an adjusting axle 1 having eccentric circular blocks 13, 13', and 14 for receiving eyescrews 31 and 32. The eyescrews have threading at opposing ends to receive the locknuts 4. Thus, by rotating the lever 12, “the locknuts 4 are moved toward each other causing the frame bars 7, 7' of the bicycle saddle to be firmly retained” See Kao, col. 3, lines 7-10. The Office Action cites element 12 as being “a lever operated locking element.” However, element 12 is merely the actuating lever for actuating the locking system. Kao neither teaches nor suggests a rotatable locking element for engaging an elongated member. Thus, Kao also does not anticipate independent claims 1 and 8.

Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 8 are patentable. Claims 3 and 4 depend, either directly or indirectly, from allowable claim 1 and are patentable for at least that reason, as well as for additional patentable features when those claims are considered as a whole. Similarly, claims 9 and 10 depend, either directly or indirectly, from allowable claim 8 and are allowable for at least that reason.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 2 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kao in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,213,553 B1 to Fitz (hereinafter “Fitz”). Claim 2 depends directly from claim 1 and is, therefore, patentable for at least that reason as well as for additional patentable features when that claim is considered as a whole. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claim 6 for the following reasons.

Applicant has amended claim 6 to recite a ‘lever-operated rotatable locking element.’ As discussed above, Kao fails to teach or suggest a rotatable locking element. Further, Fitz also fails to teach or suggest that feature of amended claim 6. Thus, the cited references, either individually or in combination, fail to teach or suggest each limitation of claim 6. Accordingly, independent claim 6, as amended, is patentable.

Claims 4, 7, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kao in view of Fitz and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,836,604 to Romano. Claim 4 depends indirectly from allowable claim 1 and is, therefore, patentable for at least that reason as well as for additional patentable features when that claim is considered as a whole. Similarly, claim 7 depends directly from allowable claim 6 and is, therefore, patentable for at least that reason. Claims 9 and 10 depend, either directly or indirectly, from allowable claim 8 and are, therefore, patentable for at least that reason as well as for additional patentable features when those claims are considered as a whole.

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kao in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,772,069 to Szymski. Claim 5 depends indirectly from allowable claim 1 and is, therefore, patentable for at least that reason as well as for additional patentable features when that claim is considered as a whole.

For the reasons stated above, claims 1-10 are in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if such communication would expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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By Bernard L. Kleinke
BERNARD L. KLEINKE

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Paragraph beginning on Page 8, line 15:

The platform 100 is pivotally supported on "pivot" bolts 112 which are threadedly received in boss or projection members (no [numberal] numeral) forming part of a sub-plate member 114 that forms part of the platform 100 and which is securely bolted to the underside of an upper structural member 116 in which the channels 102 are formed. These bolts 112 [passe] pass through bores formed in circular bosses 202a at the tops of a pair of the post-like support members 202 which are bolted to a base platform 204 that forms a main portion of the base member. This base platform 204 is, in this instance, formed of a flat plate which has circular cross-section re-inforcing beads provided along each side.

Paragraph beginning on Page 9, line 16:

The clamp arrangement 300 which permits the adjustment of the pitch angle or orientation of the base 200 [includes a)] is such that the lower clamp member 304 has a curved concave surface provided with a plurality of straight teeth or splines 304a and is rigid with the lower portion 208, while the curved convex upper clamp member 302 which is provided with a plurality of corresponding teeth or splines 302a on its convexly curved surface. The upper and lower clamp members 302, 304 are arranged to engage one another and to be adjustably set in a number of different positions relative to one another. The upper clamp member 302 is held against a lower surface of the flat plate 204 by an arrangement which includes a clamp connection/tension bolt or shaft 306 which passes through apertures formed in both of the upper and lower clamp members 302, 304 and the flat plate 204. This clamp connection/tension bolt 306 also passes through apertures formed in arcuately shaped member 308 which is adapted to seat on the upper surface of the flat plate 204, and an elliptic prism-shaped member 310 which matingly seats in an arcuate groove 308a formed in the arcuately shaped member 308.

Paragraph beginning on Page 10, line 14:

It will be understood that the invention is not limited to the clamp structure which is shown in the drawings and that modifications may be made thereto without departing from the

scope of the invention. For example, alternative clamp elements/parts such as those described in United States Patent No, 5,979,978 issued on November 9, 1999, in the name of Olsen et al. may also be used [is] if so desired. It will be noted, however, that it is advantageous that the cam lever at one end of the bolt, which is used to clamp the adjustment permitting arrangements together, be provided to enable quick and easy adjustment as one rider changes and another takes his or her place.

Paragraph beginning on Page 10, line 22:

The operation of the above-described embodiment is such that when it is required to remove one saddle and replace it with another, the lock lever 110 is rotated from the position illustrated in Figs. 2, 3 and 6 to that shown in Figs 5, 7 and 8. This rotates the lock-block 108 from the engaging locking position to the release position. Under these conditions, only the effect of the detents 104 resist removal of the seat frame portions 10 from the channels 102. A small force is sufficient to detach the saddle from its seated position. The new saddle or seat 12 may then be placed in position wherein the detents 104 will conveniently hold the saddle 12 in position until such time as the operator rotates the lock lever 110 back [110] to its locking position whereby the lock-block 108 is brought into locking engagement with the upper surfaces of the saddle frame members 10.

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Amended) A quick release/connection arrangement for a seat, comprising:
a seat receiving structure having recessed portions adapted to receive a pair of elongate members which form part of a frame of the seat;
a [lever operated] lever-operated rotatable locking element [is] rotatably supported on the seat receiving structure [receiving member] and selectively rotatable between a first position wherein engagement [with] between the rotatable locking element and the elongate members is absent and wherein the pair of elongate members are removable from the seat structure receiving member, and a second position wherein the elongate members are engaged by the rotatable locking element and locked in position on the seat receiving structure [receiving member].

4. (Amended) A quick release/connection arrangement as set forth in claim 3, wherein said cam arrangement comprises a lever which is rotatably supported on a shaft which is disposed through apertures respectively formed in the first and second clamp members and which is operatively connected with the first clamp member, said lever having a cam surface formed thereon proximate an axis about which said lever is rotatable with respect to the shaft, the cam surface being engageable with a surface which is stationary with respect to the second clamp member to produce a reaction which forces the first and second clamp members together into locking engagement with one another.
6. (Amended) A mounting arrangement for a seat comprising:
a seat receiving platform which is pivotally supported on a base member; [and]
a resilient biasing member operatively interconnecting the platform and the base member to permit a limited amount of pivotal movement of the platform with respect to the base member;
and
a lever-operated rotatable locking element mounted on the platform, said rotatable locking element being movable between a first position wherein a seat can be readily removed from the platform and a second position wherein the seat is immovably locked onto the platform.
7. (Amended) A mounting arrangement as set forth in claim 6, further comprising: [a lever operated locking element mounted on the platform which is movable between a first position wherein a seat can be readily removed from the platform, and a position wherein the seat is immovably locked onto the platform, and] a lever operated clamp which interconnects the base member and a chassis of a device [operated locking element which is movable between a first position wherein a seat can be readily removed from the platform, and a position wherein the seat is immovably locked onto the platform].
8. (Amended) A mounting arrangement for a seat comprising:
a seat receiving platform [which is] pivotally supported on a base member;

a [lever operated] lever-operated rotatable locking element mounted on said platform and [movable] selectively rotatable between a first position wherein a seat can be readily removed from the platform, and a second position wherein the seat is immovably locked onto the platform; and

a lever operated clamp [which interconnects] interconnecting the base member and a chassis of a device.